

<p style="text-align: center;">CHAPTER 16</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DOCUMENT IMAGING AND MICROFILMING STANDARDS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Administrative Rule 6, Court Records Media Storage Standards</p>	<p>CONTACT: Tom Jones tom.jones@courts.IN.gov Direct: 317-233-3695 30 S. Meridian St., Suite 500 Indianapolis, IN 46204 Main: 317-232-2542 Fax: 317-233-6586</p>
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Purpose

[Ind. Administrative Rule 6](#) sets forth the standards for documenting the conversion of paper court records to other media. The standards provide the means for guaranteeing the legibility and permanency of converted documents by incorporating international and national standards. The standards also ensure that judicial records meet evidentiary standards to protect public and private rights. The rule provides the technical and documentation steps needed to fulfill [Ind. Trial Rule 77\(J\)](#) and [Ind. Administrative Rule 16\(H\)](#).

Ind. Administrative Rule 6 applies to all courts, and it is the responsibility of the trial court clerk and court to meet all of its standards. This rule applies to the purchase of equipment that meets the standards set forth in the rule as well as supplies. It also sets forth a series of steps to guarantee that the imaging output satisfied its requirements. If the standards set forth in this rule are met, then the imaged output is considered the official record of the court.

Assistance from the Division of State Court Administration is available. Use of imaging systems for trial court records involves the court and its clerk, vendors, and the Division. It is highly technical in nature and the Division has established policies and procedures for converting paper-based records into scanned images as well as addressing the need for readability and permanency. Please contact the Division before purchasing an imaging system or entering into a contract with a contractor to scan court records. For additional help, please also see [Administrative Rule 6: Standards and Policies](#).

Reasons For Thinking About Alternative Media

There are numerous reasons why a court or clerk's office would be thinking about converting paper documents into alternative media. Some of the more common reasons are:

- Running out of space.
- Backup for disaster preparedness.
- Preservation of the original document.
- Allow multiple users to access documents simultaneously.

Microfilming

Microfilm is the best alternative media to use for records that have long term or permanent retention periods such as:

- Records of Judgments and Orders (RJOs), and
- Chronological Case Summaries (CCS).

Microfilm has many advantages.

- When stored under the proper conditions, microfilm has a very long life. If stored correctly, microfilm has a longer life than paper.
- There are established international standards concerning the microfilm process.

However, microfilm also does have disadvantages among which are the following:

- It is an analog medium that may be used only by one user at a time.
- It requires temperature and humidity controlled storage in order to be stored properly.

Imaging/Scanning

Scanning is best to use:

- When multiple users are involved, and
- With records that have short retention periods.

Scanning has several advantages.

- It allows multiple users to access the information at the same time because it is digital.
- Scanning is user-friendly.

However, scanning also has its disadvantages.

- Scanning software and hardware become obsolete in a short period of time.
- Although international standards are developing, there are fewer standards in place than with microfilm.
- A volatile business market exists in this area with many companies going out of business or changing the focus of its business.

Disposal of Records

Court records that have been preserved in accordance with the standards set out in Administrative Rule 6 may be destroyed or otherwise disposed, but only after the court or clerk files a “[Destruction Certificate](#)” with the Division of State Court Administration certifying that the records have been microfilmed or scanned in accordance with the standards set out in Ind. Administrative Rule 6, and the Division issues a written authorization for destruction of such records. There are two Destruction Certificate forms: one for microfilmed records and one for scanned or imaged records.

Imaging and Records Standards Manual

The Records Management Committee of the Association of Clerks of the Circuit Courts of Indiana has developed an excellent manual on the certification of an imaging system (see http://acccind.org/records_management.html). This manual was developed in

consultation with the Division's staff, and the manual has also received the endorsement of the Supreme Court Records Management Committee.

Last modified 2/19/14